Remarks/Arguments

Status of the Application

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections set forth in the Office Action mailed on October 10, 2003.

- Claims 1-3, and 5-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e)

- Claim 26 is newly presented

Thus, claims 1-3, and 5-26 are pending in the current application.

The Claims

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,131,120 to *Reid* (*Reid*). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 1

Reid "extends the concept of directory services to the management and control of enterprise networks by integrating directory technology, router/gateway management, and server management to form an enterprise network management and network security solution" (col. 5, ll. 23-27). Furthermore, *Reid* discloses that an enterprise directory, "stores the names, workstations, router/gateways, servers, OP addresses locations, passwords, and encryption keys for individuals" (col. 5, ll. 36-40). Thus, *Reid* discloses generalized methods of managing enterprise networks through the use of directories.

In contrast, the present claim explicitly requires, "defining a virtual domain in an electronic messaging system." The problem being addressed by the present invention is defined in the Specification at page 4:

> In the example shown in Fig. 1, a mail user in ABC, Inc. (which lawfully owns its DNS domain name *abc.com*, but relies on the ISP *isp.net* to host its email) desiring to send and receive mail uses the domain name username@abc.com <u>even though his mailserver is really *mailhost.isp.net*.</u> It also means that any user in the *abc.com* domain, connects to a mailhost in the domain *abc.com* - for example *mail.abc.com* - to access his/her mail.
> Since the email system 100 requires a separate mail server to be supported by the SP 106 for each of the domains abc.com through xyz.gov, although well understood and easy to manage, the email system 100 is not cost effective for

small domains. In addition, as the number of domains increases, the management of the individual services becomes increasingly unwieldy.

Thus, a user domain, rather than being coupled to a particular server in a one to one relationship as might be configured under *Reid*, may, as an embodiment of the present claim, instead be configured as a virtual domain associated with a virtual node that in turn corresponds to an ISP's real domain name server. In this manner, network resources may be leveraged to allow multiple user domains to reside on a single logical server.

While *Reid* discloses methods to manage and access network resources through directories, *Reid* does not disclose the use of indirection methods to allow for the use of domain name services in an electronic messaging system.

Therefore, for at least the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claim 1 is not supported by the cited art and respectfully request reconsideration of the above rejection.

Claims 2-3 and 5-13

Dependent claims 2-3 and 5-13 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 1 and are therefore also allowable over the cited art for at least the reasons stated for claim 1. Further, the dependent claims require additional elements that when considered in context of the claimed inventions further patentably distinguish the invention from the cited art.

In particular, dependent claim 9 is directed toward using a routing table based upon the segmented name space by a transfer agent to direct an email message. Thus, the present claim reiterates the use of indirection to manage an email message, which is not disclosed by *Reid*.

Further, dependent claim 11 is further directed toward email messaging systems including the limitations of claim 1, which are not disclosed by *Reid*.

Claim 14

Independent claim 14 is a computer-readable medium claim reciting substantially the same limitations as does claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 14 is also allowable over the cited art for at least the reasons cited for independent claim 1.

Claims 15-17

Dependent claims 15-17 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 14 and are therefore also allowable over the cited art for at least the reasons stated for claim 14.

Further, the dependent claims require additional elements that when considered in context of the claimed inventions further patentably distinguish the invention from the cited art.

Claim 18

Like independent claim 1, independent claim 18 explicitly requires, "a hierarchically organized directory coupled to the messaging server arranged to define a virtual domain node corresponding to a real (non-virtual) domain having associated with it a plurality of virtual domain attributes to the virtual domain node wherein the hierarchically organized directory is a hierarchical structure that resembles a tree with one major branch at the top and many branches and sub-branches below." As such, claim 18 recites at least some of substantially the same limitations as does claim 1 and therefore the Applicant contends that claim 18 is also allowable over the cited art for at least the reasons cited for independent claim 1

Claims 19-25

Dependent claims 19-25 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 18 and are therefore also allowable over the cited art for at least the reasons stated for claim 18. Further, the dependent claims require additional elements that when considered in context of the claimed inventions further patentably distinguish the invention from the cited art.

Claim 26

Claim 26 is newly presented to the Examiner. Support for the proposed claim may be found in claim 1 as previously presented.

Applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,

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